Goodbye Yucky Thoughts and Feelings

An EMDR Workbook for Children

by
Ann P. Waldon, LCSW, BCD

with illustrations by
Christopher J. Waldon

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Appreciations---Many thanks to all of my Helpers. Thanks to my son, Chris, for his wonderful graphics and to my husband, Roger, and our other children, Emily and Matt, for their support and consultation. Thanks to our Hungarian friend, Akos, for his page layouts. Thanks to Ricky Greenwald and to Jan, Carol, Dan, Leslie, Suzi, Ida, Reg, and Mary who attended Ricky's Retreat for EMDR/ Kid Trainers in June, 2003. I appreciate your feedback and encouragement. Thanks to Gary Peterson for his ongoing consultation and support. And thanks to Shirley Jean Schmidt for her concepts on Resources.

Please read the "Instructions for EMDR Therapists…" on pages 25-26 before using the workbook with children.

To all who use this workbook with children: I welcome your feedback and will incorporate your ideas in future revisions. To order copies, please email awaldon@nc.rr.com, call 919-932-3908, or write 212 West Main St, Carrboro, NC 27510. Also available world wide at www.lulu.com.

© 2004 Ann P. Waldon, LCSW. You have my permission to copy the Certificate on page 23 and the Worksheet on pages 27-28. Aside from those pages, no part of this workbook may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form without permission from the author.

My Workbook

Hi! My name is _____.

I am ___ years old. I am using this workbook to get over some yucky thoughts and feelings about a problem or something bad that happened to me.

But… Sometimes good things happen to kids and I have good things in my life too. Here is a picture of something good that happened to me.

When I think about this, I smile and I think

_____
_____
_____.

I solved a problem once. I just kept saying to myself, “I can do this,” and eventually I did. The problem I solved was

_____
_____.

I solved it by

_____
_____.

Then I felt

_____

_____.

I am gathering my strength and my helpers to face a problem or deal with a yucky experience I had. I am drawing my face in this circle.

Because . . .

Sometimes sad mad scary things happen to kids…

Sometimes kids feel yucky just thinking about them…

Sometimes kids have scary or upsetting pictures in their minds about them…

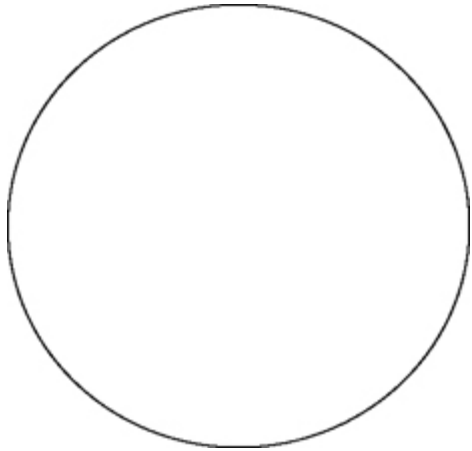
Sometimes kids have bad dreams about them…

Sometimes kids think about them when they want to be doing something else…

This book is to help me with the yucky pictures or thoughts in my mind or the yucky feelings inside…

So I will feel GOOD AGAIN!!!!!!

Draw what your face will look like then.



My Team of Helpers

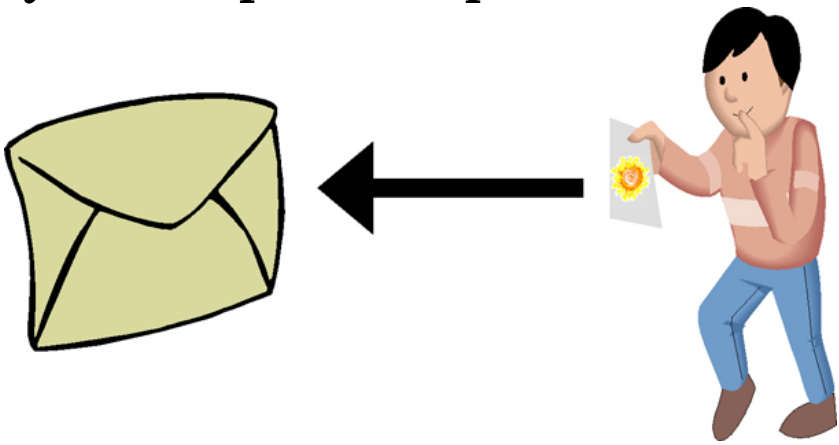
Kids with yucky thoughts and feelings often try to zoom away from them.

If the yucky feeling is small, this might work. But if the yucky feeling is big, running away from it usually makes it bigger **and bigger and bigger.**

It is best to face the problem. But, of course, you will need a team of helpers with you. On the next pages, you will think about your helpers and draw each one. You will draw each one and put it in your Envelope of Helpers. Each helper can be a:

Hero in a story
One of your trading cards
Someone you know
Favorite animal
Something you pretend

My Envelope of Helpers



Find an envelope. This is where you will keep the drawings of your helpers until they are needed. Put your name on the envelope and decorate it any way you wish. Put it in a safe place.

My Protector Helper

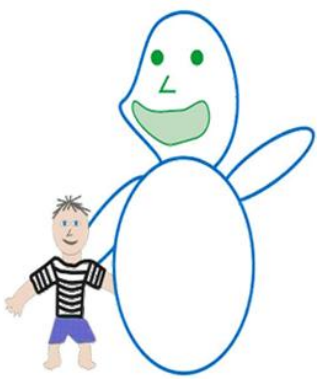
Strong Brave Makes choices Takes action Protective

A time when I was strong + brave

_____
_____
_____

People in my life who are like this

_____
_____
_____
_____



Draw a picture of your protector helper. Put it in your Envelope of Helpers.

My Kind Loving Helper

Understanding Loving Kind Patient Warm

A time when I was
loving + kind:

_____
_____
_____
_____

People in my life
who are like this:

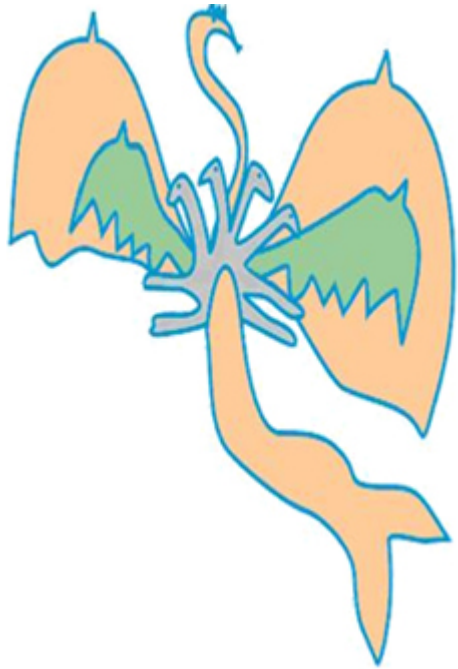
_____
_____
_____
_____

Draw a picture of your kind loving helper. Put it in your Envelope

of Helpers.

My Thinker Helper

Thoughtful Patient Confident Problem-Solver Decision- Maker

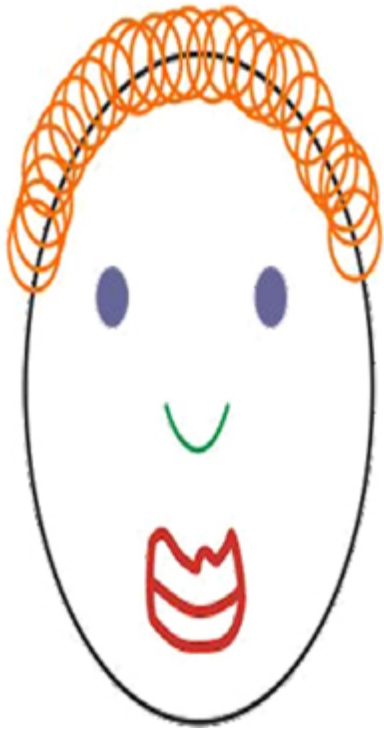


A time when I used thinking to solve a problem:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

People in my life who are like this

_____
_____
_____
_____



Draw a picture of your thinker helper. Put it in your Envelope of Helpers.

My Good Heart

Sometimes when children have yucky experiences, they think they caused the problem and they are bad. Every child has a good heart deep inside. When you face a problem, it is good to remember that you were born good and you have a good heart deep inside.

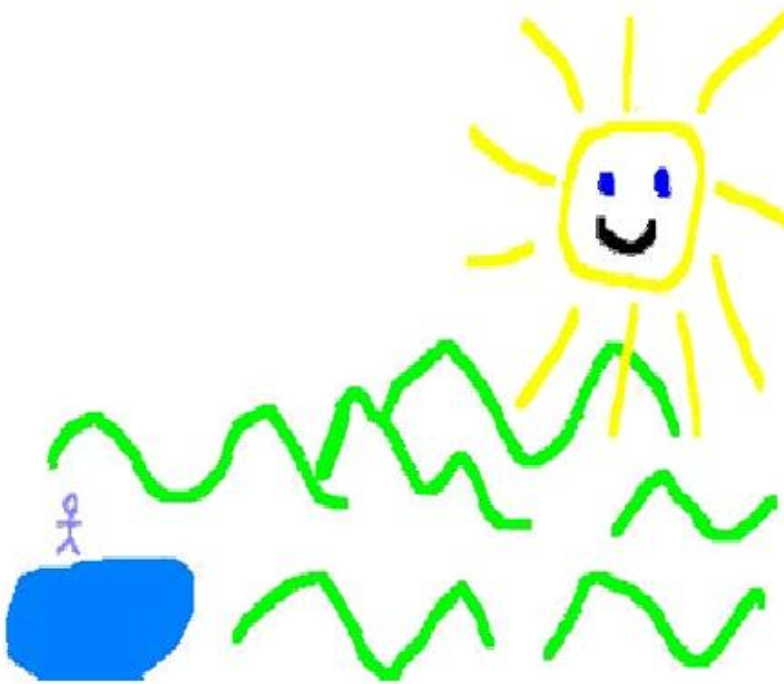
Draw a picture of your good heart. Put it in your Envelope of Helpers.

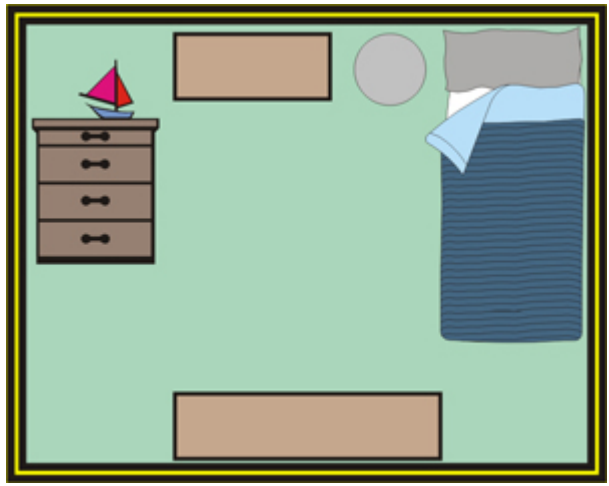
My Safe Place

Comfortable Safe and Calm Feels Good Nothing Bad Ever Happened

Safe places I go to take breaks & rest:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____





It might be:
My room
The Beach
The Mountains
A favorite vacation
Soft blankets
A place you imagine

Draw a picture of your safe place. Put it in your envelope of helpers.

Stop Means Stop

You have your helpers ready, so now it is time to face your problem. Remember that when you face yucky feelings, they sometimes get bigger before they get smaller. Usually it is best to be brave and keep thinking about them until they get smaller. BUT… you can choose to STOP if you need to.

If you need to STOP, say:

Or put up your hand like this:

When you stop, go back to your picture of a safe place and imagine being there.

Or

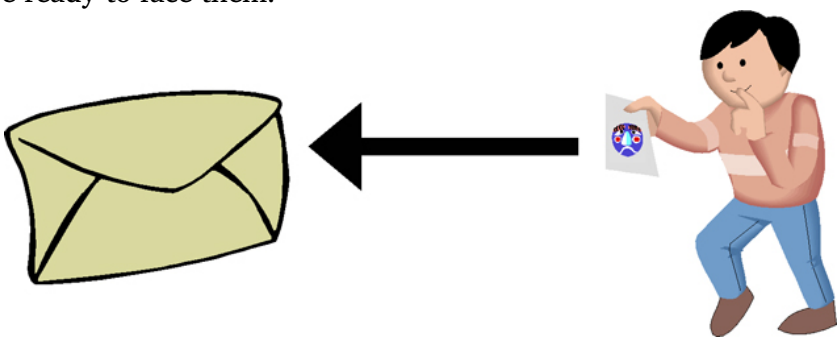
Think of something that makes you feel happy.

PRACTICE DOING THIS BEFORE YOU GO ON !!

My Envelope of Problems

Find an envelope. Put your name on it and decorate it any way you wish. Anytime you want to stop thinking about your problem, you can put the picture of it in the envelope.

Imagine that all the yucky thoughts, feelings, and pictures in your mind are going into the envelope too. They can stay there until you are ready to face them.



Then when you are ready to face a problem or deal with a yucky experience, you will take the drawing of it out of the envelope.

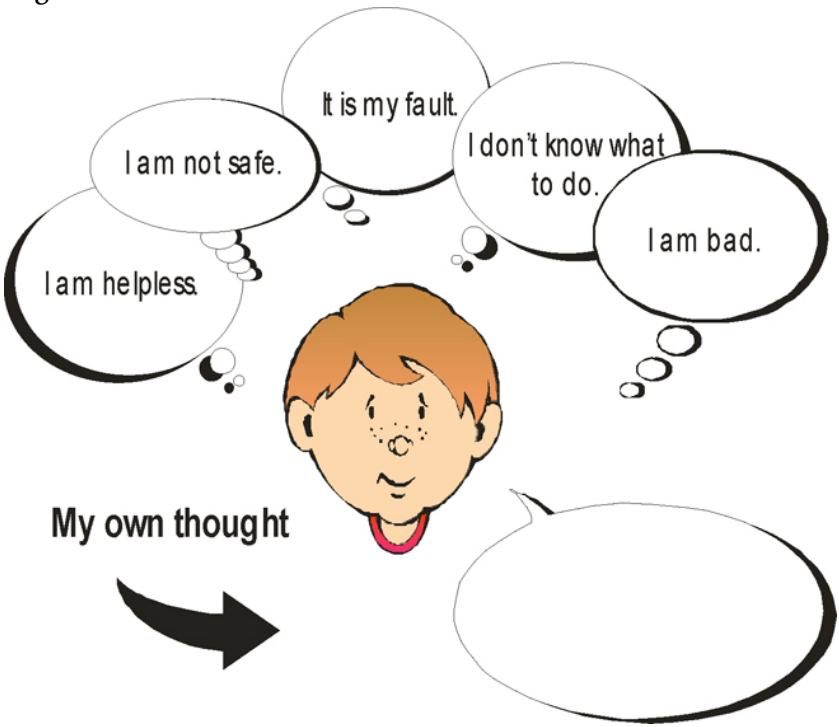
Time to Draw the Problem

Now it is time to draw a picture of your problem or yucky experience. It might be a sad mad scary thing that happened to you, or a nightmare, or getting bullied at school, or wetting the bed, or a time you got in trouble.

Draw a picture of the problem. Draw the worst part of it. If there are other parts of the problem, draw pictures of those too. If you have other problems on your mind that you want to work on later, it is fine to make drawings of those too. Put your drawings in the Envelope of Problems until you are ready to work on them. Then take the drawing out of the envelope and turn the page.

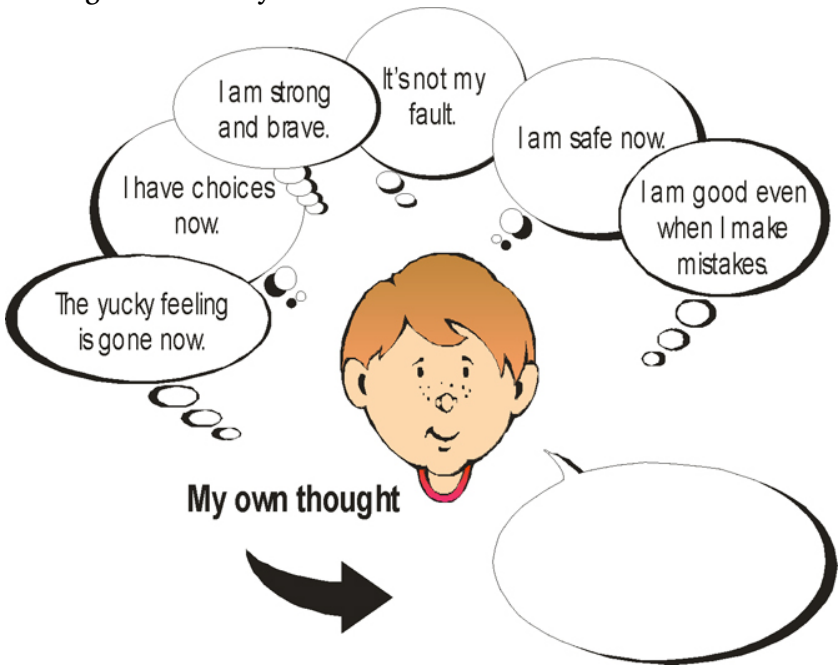
My Yucky Thought

When you think about your problem or yucky experience, what do you think to yourself? Choose a thought from this list or make up your own. On the worksheet for this problem, write down your thought.

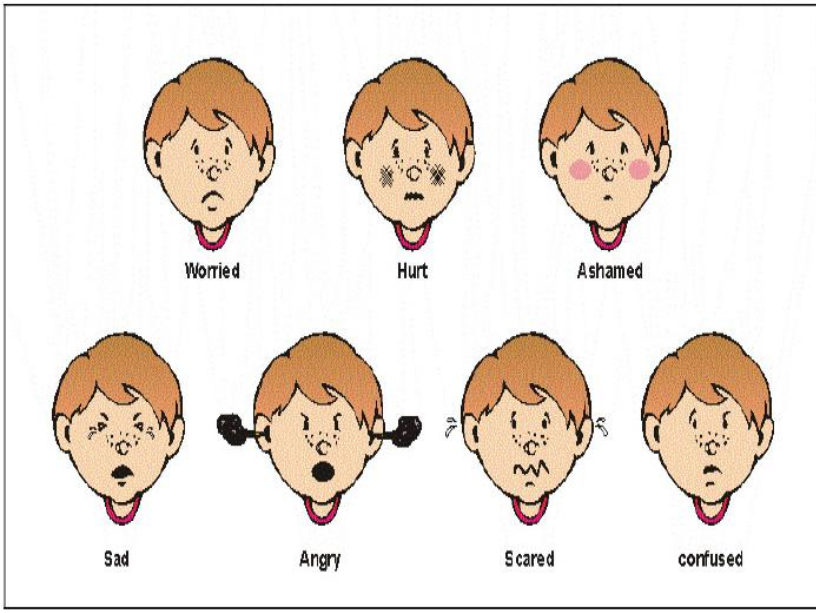


My Good Thought

When you think about your problem or yucky experience, what would you like to think about yourself instead of what you think now? Choose a thought from this list or make up your own. Write the thought down on your worksheet.


I am strong and brave.
It's not my fault.
I am safe now.
I have choices now.
I am good even when I make mistakes.
The yucky feeling is gone now.
My own thought

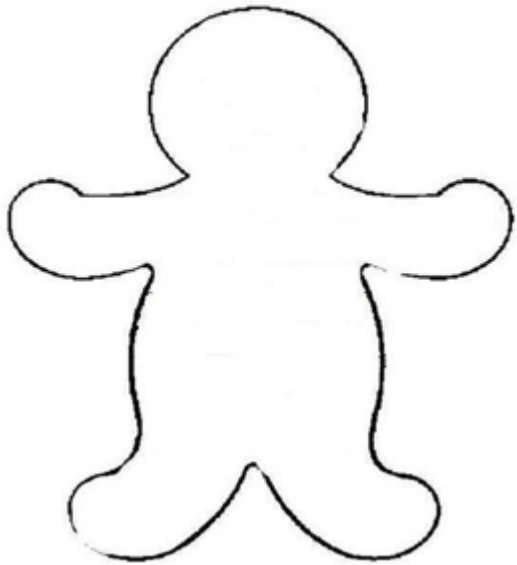
My Yucky Feelings



When you think about your problem or yucky experience, how do you feel? On the worksheet for this problem, write down your feelings.

My Body

When you think about your problem or yucky experience, where do you feel it in your body? In your tummy, in your chest, or all over? Trace this picture of a body, and color in the places where you have that yucky feeling.



Facing My Problem or Yucky Experience

Take your team of helpers out of the Envelope of Helpers. Choose the ones you need with you to face this problem or yucky experience.

Is there anything else you need with you? Some kids like to have a parent or a special stuffed animal or a good luck charm nearby.

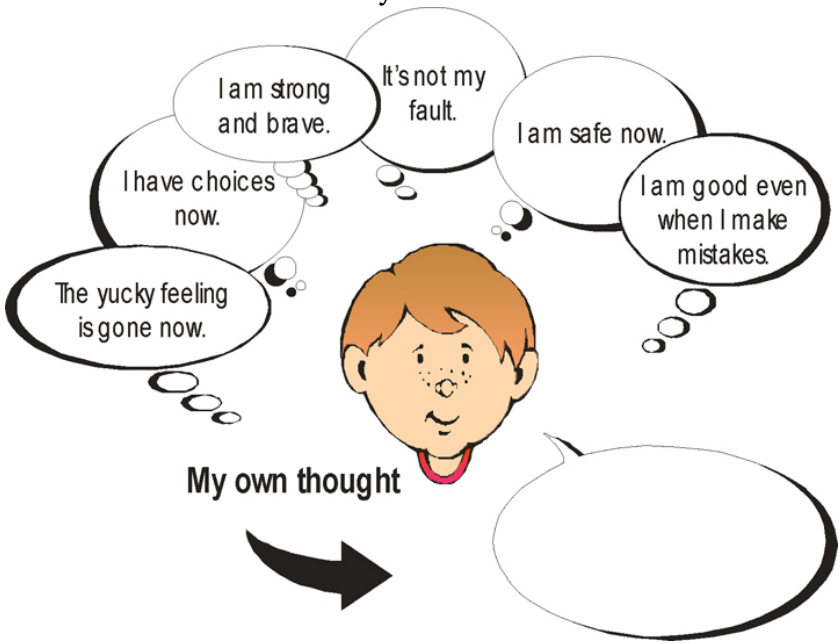
Is there any other skill or helper you need to face this problem? Draw whatever you need.

or or ?

Now, your therapist will show you just what to do to face the problem a little bit at a time. Remember that the yucky thoughts and feelings might get a little stronger at first but then you will feel better. When you feel better, go to the next page.

I Feel Better Now

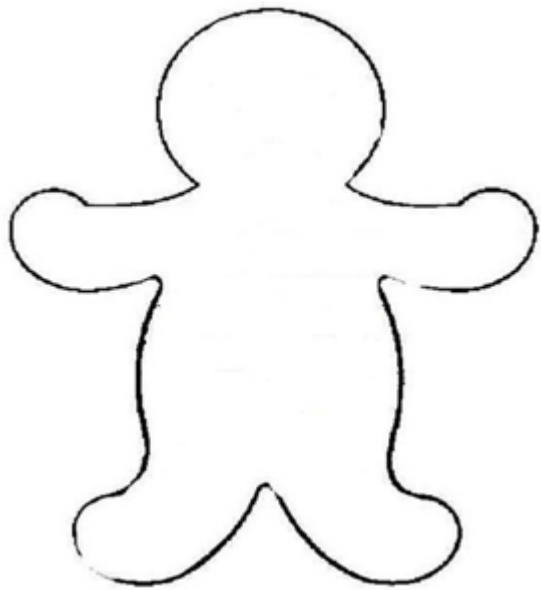
When you think about your problem or yucky experience, what is your good thought now? Does the one you had before still fit or is there a better one? Write it on your worksheet.


I am strong and brave.
It's not my fault.
I am safe now.
I have choices now.
I am good even when I make mistakes.
The yucky feeling is gone now.
My own thought

Your therapist will show you how to make this good thought stronger.

My Body Feels Better

Now when you think about your problem or yucky experience, how does your body feel? Check all through your body to make sure the yucky feeling is all gone.



Congratulations!! You faced your problem!!

Certificate of Accomplishment

This certificate is awarded to:

_____

For Bravery in Facing a Problem!

Now I believe this good thought:

_____

Signature of Therapist

Date

Instructions for EMDR Therapists on the use of Goodbye Yucky Thoughts and Feelings, an EMDR Workbook for Children by Ann P. Waldon, LCSW, BCD

General

- This workbook is suitable for children aged 6-12
- Explain EMDR including this workbook to the child and the child's parent or guardian. Be sure you address basic client/ parent fears and obtain informed consent before proceeding with this workbook.
- This workbook covers Phases 3-7 of the Standard EMDR protocol. It assumes that the therapist has already completed the client history, developed a therapeutic relationship, and practiced self-soothing and relaxation techniques. It assumes that this workbook is a part of the treatment plan based on a case formulation.
- If possible, each child should have a separate workbook to write in. When therapy is complete, the child can take home the resource portion of the workbook if the home environment is a supportive one.
  However, the workbook has been made so that it can be used with multiple children and drawings can be stored separately
- You will need 8 ½ ×11 paper and markers (or crayons)
- Safety first---Take it slow, at the child's pace. Child consent is important at each stage. Plan to complete only a couple of pages each session. For many children, access to a safe parent is important during stressful processing.
- If the child is in an unstable or unsupportive living situation, focus on the development of helpers. It may not be safe to process any painful memories or problems until the living situation improves

Creating a Team of Helpers

- Take time to help the child develop each kind of helper. Help

the child think of people who effectively demonstrate the skills described on each page. Offer the child a list to choose from, including a coach, teacher, parent, older brother or sister, religious leader, mentor, family friend, etc.

- Ask the child, "When you think about this person, what do you see, hear, feel?" and "What would this person say?"
- Encourage the child not to copy the examples on each page, but instead to draw a helper unique to that child.
- Strengthen the child's connection to each helper, only if the child has no negative associations and no negative affect. Have the child look at the drawing and notice positive thoughts, feelings, and body sensations while doing short sets of DAS.
- After finishing the helpers as described, you might ask Ricky Greenwald's question, "If everything that happened were a dream and you had to go back in it, what else would you need to be safe?" Have the child draw any extra helpers.
- Later, as an interweave if processing stalls, new helpers can be introduced and drawn. The therapist can ask, "When you think about this problem, what other skills or strengths do you need?" Each of these can be strengthened with DAS.
- After the child draws the safe place, encourage the child to close eyes and picture being in the safe place. Suggest looking around to notice sights, sounds, smell, tastes, and touch. The child can change anything that does not feel right or add anything that makes it feel safer. Then the drawing can be adjusted as needed. Strengthen the sense of safety with DAS.

Processing Problems and Painful memories

- Use the "Stop Means Stop" page to explain that the child can choose to stop. Practice before moving on.
- Identify problems/experiences to target. The child may choose to draw one problem and then work on that or make separate drawings for parts of the problem/experience that are disturbing. The child may draw several target problems or memories and store them in the envelope until time to process. Offer the child a list of typical problems to choose from, if needed.
- Use the envelope as a container. Practice taking problems out with their associated thoughts and feelings, and putting them

away. Being able to contain painful memories, thoughts, and feelings is an important skill for processing safely.

- Have the child take out the drawing of the problem or experience to work on and a blank Worksheet (pp. 27-28).
- If the child's home situation is unsafe, focus on strengthening instead of trauma. The child may draw and process a current challenge or obstacle and then draw a possible solution.
- Using pages 16-17 as a guide, help the child identify the negative and positive cognitions associated with the current target. You or the child can write these on the worksheet for that target. Some children will not identify a positive cognition until after processing. If possible, help the child identify a Validity of Cognition (VOC) for the positive cognition and put that on the worksheet.
- Help the child identify the emotions associated with this target. Write those on the worksheet. Help the child measure the Subjective Units of Disturbance (SUD) and put that on the worksheet too.
- Let the child choose the helpers needed for each problem/ experience. Encourage the child to let the team of helpers do some of the work. Have the child take the pictures of the helpers out of the envelope.
- For the processing itself, have the child spread out the drawings of the chosen helpers on a table, on one side of the child. Then, have the child put the drawing of the problem or yucky experience on the table, on the other side of the child.
- Say, "Now with your team of helpers here with you, think about your thought, your feelings, and what you notice in your body as you look back and forth." Have the child look back and forth between the helper drawings and the problem drawing (DAS). Encourage the child to look back and forth while keeping the head still. You may need to lead the child's eyes by pointing to the helpers and then the problem, back and forth, several times. It is helpful to offer the child a strategy for maintaining needed distance from the experience. The child can think of the eye movements as a movie of bringing the helpers along to solve the problem or watch the yucky experience on the screen of the drawing. After each set, ask the child what is noticed. There is room on the worksheet to jot down notes if you wish.

- If processing gets stuck, use an interweave. Introduce possible solutions and have the child draw any that feel right.
- When the SUD is 0, use page 21 to identify the positive cognition. Strengthen it using DAS by putting the drawing of the Good Thought on one side and the drawing of the Problem/Yucky experience on the other.
- Using page 22, encourage the child to do another body scan to make sure places of discomfort have cleared.
- Have the child put the helpers and problem drawings in the container of the envelope and then go to the Safe Place.
- This process can be repeated for other targets, past then present. Then repeat for a similar situation in the future.

Worksheet for Goodbye Yucky Thoughts and Feelings, An EMDR Workbook for Children by Ann P. Waldon, LCSW

Make a copy of this worksheet for each problem/experience to be processed. As the child goes through pages 14 through 22 of the workbook on each problem, use this worksheet to record the interventions.

Child's name_____ Age_____ __ Child gave informed consent ___Practiced Stop Means Stop

Problem_____

Helpers needed for this problem
_____

Drawing of the worst part of the problem _____
_____

Drawings of other parts of the problem _____
_____

My yucky thought
_____

My good thought
_____

How true does the good thought feel to me now? _ Not true _ A little true _ Somewhat true _ Almost true _ True

My yucky feelings
_____

How upset do I feel? _Not upset _A little upset _Somewhat upset

_Very upset _Super upset

Where I feel it in my body

_____

Notes on what I notice when I look back and forth between the helpers and the problem drawing:

My good thought now

_____

What I notice in my body now

_____

I faced my problem!!! Congratulations to me!!!

Selected References

Greenwald, Ricky. (1999). Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc.

Many of the concepts and much of the wording used in this workbook come from Ricky Greenwald. I have learned from his book, from consultation from him, and from attending his Retreat for Child EMDR Trainers in June, 2003. Although I have not cited specific pages from his book in this workbook, I want to give him credit and appreciation for all I have learned from him.

Lovett, Joan. (1999). Small Wonders: Healing Childhood Trauma with EMDR. New York: The Free Press.

Schmidt, Shirley Jean. (2002). Developmental Needs Meeting Strategy for EMDR Therapists. Texas: Shirley Jean Schmidt, MA, LPC.

The Developmental Needs Meeting Strategy (DNMS) is used with adult clients. In this workbook I apply her wonderful ideas to work with children. Some of the Helpers are adaptations of Shirley Jean's resources, simplified and changed for children.

Shapiro, Francine. (2001). Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, 2nd Ed. New York: Guilford Press.

Tinker, Robert and Wilson, Sandra. (1999) Through the Eyes of a Child: EMDR with Children. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

About the author…

Ann P. Waldon, LCSW, BCD is a licensed clinical social worker in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro area of North Carolina. Trained in EMDR in 1997, she is now a Certified EMDR Therapist. A specialist in psychotherapy with children and adolescents for almost 30 years, she is excited about the effectiveness of EMDR in healing childhood trauma. She hopes this workbook will guide trained EMDR therapists in using EMDR with children safely and effectively.

About the illustrator…

Christopher J. Waldon is a law student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Known over many years for his creative graphic designs of t-shirts and CD covers, he brings his skills and

talents to this project to benefit children. He hopes that his simple illustrations will make this workbook visually appealing and will help children feel more comfortable expressing themselves in their own drawings.

To order more workbooks…

Order online at www.EMDRresources.com. Or, send a check for $22.50 (includes postage) to Ann P. Waldon, LCSW at the address on page 2.